

SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

January 3, 2021 - 10:00 AM

Living Springs Lutheran Church

4224 Hard Scrabble Road, Columbia, SC 29223
www.livingspringscolumbia.org

Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us.

Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.



Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen... since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses... let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus... (Hebrews 11:1-3, 12:1-2)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

We stand as able

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Pastor: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who was in the beginning, who makes a dwelling among us, who covers us with justice and mercy.

People: Amen.

Pastor: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

(Silence for reflection - we kneel as able)

Pastor: God of goodness and lovingkindness,

People: **we confess that we have sinned against you and our neighbors. We have turned away from your invitation to new life. We have turned away from the lowly and downtrodden. In your abundant mercy, forgive us our sins, those we know and those known only to you, for the sake of the one who came to live among us, Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.**

Pastor: People of God, hear this glad news: by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free—free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love, † comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

We focus on the cross as it enters the sanctuary.

GATHERING SONG

"Arise, Your Light Has Come"

*Arise, your light has come! The Spirit's call obey;
show forth the glory of your God which shines on you today.*

*Arise, your light has come! Fling wide the prison door;
proclaim the captive's liberty, good tidings to the poor.*

*Arise, your light has come! All you in sorrow born,
bind up the brokenhearted ones and comfort those who mourn.*

*Arise, your light has come! The mountains burst in song!
Rise up like eagles on the wing, God's pow'r will make us strong.*

*Arise, Your Light Has Come; Text: Ruth Duck; Music: FESTAL SONG, William H. Walter
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APOSTOLIC GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: **And also with you.**

Pastor: Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

We are seated

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Children, youth, and young at heart are invited for a special message. You may collect your coins or dollars at home for the bucket collection and bring them to in-person worship, to the Parking Lot Communion Distributions, or drop them off at the church office. Current collection is for the Disaster Response Fund.

Forward in faith (clap, clap, clap)

Forward in faith (clap, clap, clap)

Keepin' our eyes on Jesus,

We're runnin' the race!

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

"Jesus Name Above All Names"

Jesus, name above all names, beautiful Savior, glorious Lord.

Emmanuel, God is with us, blessed Redeemer, Living Word.

Jesus, loving Shepherd, vine of the Branches, Son of God;

The Prince of Peace, Wonderful Counselor, Lord of the universe, Light of the world.

Praise him, Lord above all lords, King above all kings, God's only Son.

The Prince of Peace, who by his Spirit comes to live in us, Master and Friend.

Jesus, name above all names, beautiful Savior, glorious Lord.

Emmanuel, God is with us, blessed Redeemer, Living Word. Blessed Redeemer, Son of God.

*"Jesus Name Above All Names" words and music by Naida Hearn
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FIRST READING

God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion Israel will rejoice over God's gifts of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.

Lector: A reading from Jeremiah.

Thus says the Lord: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, "Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel." See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here. With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a flock." For the Lord has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again. Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty, says the Lord. (Jeremiah 31:7-14)

Lector: Word of God, Word of life.

People: Thanks be to God.

PSALM 147:12-20

Lector: Worship the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion,

People: who has strengthened the bars of your gates and has blessed your children within you.

Lector: God has established peace on your borders and satisfies you with the finest wheat.

People: God sends out a command to the earth, a word that runs very swiftly.

Lector: God gives snow like wool, scattering frost like ashes.

People: God scatters hail like bread crumbs. Who can stand against God's cold?

Lector: The LORD sends forth the word and melts them; the wind blows, and the waters flow.

People: God declares the word to Jacob, statutes and judgments to Israel.

Lector: The LORD has not done so to any other nation;

People: they do not know God's judgments. Hallelujah!

SECOND READING

In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made know as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.

Lector: A reading from Ephesians.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:3-14)

Lector: Word of God, Word of life.

People: Thanks be to God.

We stand for the reading of the Gospel

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL LESSON

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to John.

People: Glory to you, O Lord.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known. (John 1:1-18)

Pastor: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, O Christ.

We are seated

MESSAGE

Rev. Eric Fink

HYMN OF THE DAY

"Word of God, Come Down on Earth"

Word of God, come down on earth, living rain from heav'n descending;

touch our hearts and bring to birth faith and hope and love unending.

Word almighty, we revere you; Word made flesh, we long to hear you.

*Word of God, Come Down on Earth; Text: James Quinn; Music: LIEBSTER JESU, WIR SIND HIER, Johann R, Ahle
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We stand as able
NICENE CREED

People: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Assist: Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

+ A brief silence +

Assist: Redeeming God, you gather together your people from the farthest parts of the earth. Protect your church from stumbling. Let it not be overcome by sorrow, division, or despair. Make us radiant with goodness, that we might live always to the praise of your glory. Hear us, O God.

People: **Your mercy is great.**

Assist: You bring together heaven and earth. All creation testifies to your splendor. Hold the ecosystems of this earth in delicate balance, from coastlands to farmlands, forests to wetlands, deserts to rainforests. Show us new ways to live in harmony with the world around us. Hear us, O God.

People: **Your mercy is great.**

Assist: You overflow with grace upon grace. Expand the imaginations of those who serve in positions of authority. Open their hearts to the needs of their nations and communities. Protect all those in harm's way and those risking danger for the sake of others. Hear us, O God.

People: **Your mercy is great.**

Assist: You bring consolation to those who weep. Embrace those who feel far-off, excluded, or defeated. Accompany those living with chronic and invisible illness. Sustain the weak and weary. Refresh those who labor under the weight of pain or sickness. We pray especially for: *Ann Lynn Caughman; Tammy Mancuso; Elizabeth Maddox; Delores Harmon; Adam Woodruff; Wendy McKenzie; Karl Schmidt; Henrietta Kaiser; Ed Brennan; Margaret Blank; Charles Kauffman; Bunie Talbert; Matthew McDonell; Bob Holmstrom; Kelly Koziol; Lila Bell; Wilma Bracey; and those we name before you now, either silently or aloud...* Hear us, O God.

People: **Your mercy is great.**

Assist: You come to us in the beauty of darkness and of light. Bring justice and reconciliation to communities divided by oppressions and misuse of power. Guide us to speak holy words of advocacy and truth. Help us to honor your image in one another. Hear us, O God.

People: **Your mercy is great.**

Assist: You turn our mourning into joy. We give thanks for those who have died in faith. With all the saints, give us our inheritance in Christ. In the fullness of time, gather us all together in your mercy. Hear us, O God.

People: **Your mercy is great.**

Pastor: O God, as we face ongoing uncertainties around coronavirus, we continue to pray for ... Hear us, O God.

People: **Your mercy is great.**

Pastor: God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.

People: **Amen.**

SHARING OF PEACE

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you always.

People: And also with you.

We greet one another, with the words that the risen Jesus spoke to his disciples: "Peace be with you."

OFFERINGS ARE GIVEN

Offering may be dropped off at the office during the week or sent through the mail. For those who wish to give electronically, you may use the secure Givelify app.

Google Play



App Store



OFFERING PRAYER

Pastor: Let us pray.

People: Gracious God, you came to us as one unknown, bringing joy and salvation to the earth. Nourish us at your banquet table, that with all who welcome your birth we may proclaim your peace, revealed in Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

THANKSGIVING FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Pastor: We have been made one as the body of Christ through the waters of baptism. In our journey of faith & life, we are fed with Christ's own body and blood. Even though we do not celebrate Holy Communion in this virtual gathering, we pause to give thanks for the gift of Holy Communion — as we anticipate, with joy, those times when we are fed at your table.

Pastor: O God most mighty, O God most merciful, O God our rock and our salvation, hear us as we offer our praise and give you thanks. When the earth was a formless void, you formed order and beauty. When Abraham and Sarah were barren, you sent them a child. When the Israelites were enslaved, you led them to freedom. Ruth faced starvation; David fought Goliath; the psalmists cried out for healing, and full of compassion, you granted the people your life. You entered our sorrows in Jesus our brother. He was born among the poor, he lived under oppression, he wept over the city. With infinite love, he conquered death and granted the people your life.

We give you thanks and praise for the gift of Holy Communion and for the blessing it brings to your people. Even though we abstain from your meal in this moment of worship, for reasons you understand, we still sense the power of your forgiveness and grace offered to us and the world through your Son. Awaiting those times when we share in this meal, we still cherish in our hearts the words which Jesus gave us:

People: In the night in which He was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of Me." Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of Me."

We take time for prayer and reflection as we sing together, giving thanks to God for all the times we have been fed with our Lord's body & blood—and look forward to the time when we gather with others around the Lord's Table.

COMMUNION REFLECTION

"Love Has Come"

Love has come—a light in the darkness! Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.

See, all heaven has come to proclaim it; hear how their song of joy arises:

Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior! Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

*Love Has Come; Words: Ken Bible; Music UN FLAMBEAU, F. Setuvin;
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LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

People: Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Pastor: Almighty God, who sent the Holy Spirit to Mary, proclaimed joy through the angels, sent the shepherds with good news, and led the magi by a star, bless you this day ☩ through the Word made flesh.

People: **Amen**

SENDING SONG

"Christ, Be Our Light"

*Longing for light, we wait in darkness. Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see.*

Refrain

*Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.*

*Longing for peace, our world is troubled. Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save us. Make us your living voice. Refrain*

*Longing for food, many are hungry. Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others, shared until all are fed. Refrain*

*Longing for shelter, many are homeless. Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others, walls made of living stone. Refrain*

*Many the gifts, many the people, many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another, signs of your kingdom come. Refrain*

*Christ, Be Our Light; Text: Bernadette Farrell; Music: CHRIST, BE OUR LIGHT, Bernadette Farrell
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DISMISSAL

Assist: Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

People: **Thanks be to God.**



God's Love Shared Through You ...



One Life Deeper in 2020!

Our prayerful goal is that God will work in every LS disciple to have an impact of faith and hope in the life of one person during 2020. **What shoes might they be wearing?** It may be someone you know already—at work, at home, at school, in the neighborhood, in your daily life. It may be a stranger whom God will bring to you this year. How will the Spirit work through you to bring someone deeper in 2020? **Deeper in Christ, Deeper in Grace, Deeper in Love!**

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS: inviting, involving, mentoring, discipling relationships 1 person at a time!

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS: for the work of God's kingdom in our community and world!

SHARING GOD'S LOVE: with those who are hurting, alone, marginalized, or feeling unloved!

SHARING GOD'S STORIES: so we do not remain silent about God's ongoing work in the world!

SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS:

Truth beyond the Facts

There are many questions today about facts. Who do we trust to give us the facts? What sources and individuals are reliable? Social media can be a great tool for sharing, but it has also become a means of spreading misinformation, false beliefs, and bad advice. Many people today are suspicious of what some claim to be the facts.

Even if we have the right facts, we might not have something more important: the truth. Facts can be a partial representation of the truth. Facts might tell us that it is sunny and warm this morning, but the weather forecast might say thunderstorms are coming in the afternoon. The latter statement is truth. Truth is the larger reality that smaller facts don't capture, and sometimes contradict.

John tells us that Jesus is God's Word, full of grace and truth. In Jesus we get the full truth of God, not merely the facts. What are the facts we might see? We are all sinful and have strayed from God's just and loving ways. The world is a mess. Left to our own ways, we are surely lost. These are the facts, as if we woke up to a dangerous thunderstorm but don't know what the weather forecast is after that. Jesus is the fuller truth that in spite of the stormy mess of the world and our individual lives, God's grace is a gift to us in Christ. There is a blue sky and a safe calm that is ours through divine love.

Some of us live with messages that tell us we are not the right kind of person to receive God's grace because of our past mistakes, or ethnicity, or gender identity, or level of education, or poverty. The truth of Jesus Christ tells us we are children of God. "From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace" (John 1:16). This is the truth that gives us life.

January Book of the Month: Proverbs (31 chapters)